



PRESS RELEASE

LAFC seeks disclosure and accountability over reported irregularities and internal objections concerning the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls

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The Lawyers' Association for Constitution (LAFC) expresses grave concern over a recent investigation by *The Indian Express* dated 23.09.2026 raising serious questions about the functioning of the Election Commission under Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. The investigation reports that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, who together constitute a majority of the three-member Commission, formally objected on at least fourteen occasions over the last ten months to decisions and communications which they said had been taken or issued without their knowledge or requisite approval. These objections including those concerning the alteration of Form 6, the centralisation of control over the electoral-roll database and the filing of appeals relating to voters in West Bengal were placed on record and copied to the Chief Election Commissioner. Particularly troubling are the reported instances where measures continued despite the written objections of the other two Commissioners, and their repeated complaints that communications were being issued in the name of the Election Commission without approval of the Commission. The investigation therefore raises a fundamental question that CEC Gyanesh Kumar must answer: who authorised these decisions, and how were they permitted to be implemented when two of the Commission's three members had formally raised objections?

The disclosures concerning Form 6 are particularly serious. Form 6 is the statutory form used by an eligible citizen to seek enrolment as a voter. The online form was reportedly altered to require an applicant to state whether the applicant, a parent or a grandparent appeared in the electoral roll prepared during the last SIR. Although the declaration was not shown as mandatory, an applicant could not submit the form without answering it. The two Election Commissioners reportedly recorded that Form 6 could not be altered through SIR instructions without amending the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960. Commissioner Sandhu subsequently described the online change as unauthorised and illegal and sought its immediate removal so that young and first-time voters were not subjected to harassment.

The same reports raise concerns about the centralisation of access to ERONet and ECINet, the systems through which electoral rolls are maintained. Commissioners Sandhu and Joshi are reported to have questioned whether Electoral Registration Officers were being denied complete access necessary to add, delete or restore names in accordance with their statutory duties. They also reportedly sought an audit to establish that no person other than the competent statutory authorities could alter the electoral database.

It has further been reported that both Election Commissioners separately approached the Cabinet Secretary after changes in work allocation affected oversight of the Commission's information-technology systems. These disclosures go beyond an ordinary difference of opinion. They raise an immediate question whether decisions affecting voter registration, deletion, restoration and the security of the electoral database were taken through the collective process required of the Commission.

The Election Commission has stated that differing views and written suggestions are part of its internal checks and balances and that the final decisions, including those relating to the SIR, were unanimous and legally sanctioned. The apparent conflict between that public position and the reported written objections can be resolved only by placing the relevant record in the public domain and subjecting the systems and decisions to independent scrutiny.

LAFC'S COLLECTIVE DEMANDS

1. **Disclosure of the record:** The Election Commission must publish the reported objection notes, the decisions and communications to which they relate, the approvals obtained, the action taken on each objection and the minutes of the relevant meetings, subject only to narrowly tailored lawful redactions.
2. **Immediate correction of Form 6:** The SIR-linked declaration must be removed from the online Form 6 unless it has been introduced through a lawful amendment. The Commission must also clarify the status of applications already submitted or impeded by the altered form and ensure that no young or first-time voter suffers any prejudice because of it.
3. **Independent systems audit:** ERONet, ECINet and all SIR-related modules must undergo an independent legal and technical audit covering access permissions, change logs, authorisation to alter voter data and any restriction placed on the lawful functions of Electoral Registration Officers.
4. **Protection of voters and preservation of records:** All physical and digital records, including file notings, emails, approval trails and database logs, must be preserved. No eligible elector should remain excluded merely because a centrally controlled system prevents a statutory officer from recording a lawful decision.
5. **A document-based response and independent inquiry:** Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar must issue a detailed response addressing the specific objections. The complete record should be placed before an independent inquiry and before Parliament so that the legality of the recent decisions can be examined.
6. **Fixing responsibility:** If the inquiry establishes that decisions were issued without lawful approval, that the views of the majority were disregarded, or that statutory officers were unlawfully restricted, responsibility must be fixed. In that event, the Chief Election Commissioner must resign or face the constitutionally prescribed process for removal.
7. The integrity of electoral rolls cannot depend upon opaque software, undisclosed directions or assurances that cannot be tested against the record. LAFC calls upon the Election Commission to disclose the complete facts and take corrective action without delay.